

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

NO. 693. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 1882.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER XXII. THE END OF MISS DOYLE.

THE journey was continued and ended in almost absolute silence. Phoebe's soarings after escape into the air of a higher, wider, fuller, and more harmonious world turned to feebly hopeless flutterings; Phil had grasped her by the wings, as a boy catches a sparrow. She had nothing to say to him; and as for him, it was impossible to preach to a woman one has loved on the text of her having become a thief and a companion of thieves, if not more than the mere companion of one of them. He was dumbly indignant with the universe, and scornful of himself for being unable to concentrate his universal indignation sufficiently upon Phoebe. She appeared hopelessly and shamelessly lost beyond reclaim, and he had to think afresh at every fresh step over what could possibly be done with her. As for her, she was in twenty states of mind at once, all of them as seemingly inconsistent with one another as if she had ten different hearts and ten different brains. She was afraid to go back to her father in this unaccountable and inexplicable fashion, and yet was longing to be at home again where nothing but dulness and solitude could henceforth trouble her. She still wanted to escape from everybody, and longed to be taken in hand so strongly as to be made to feel that escape was impossible. She was as ready as ever to stand up for Stanislas if he were attacked, and to be true to him in danger, yet she shuddered at the very thought of ever having to see his face again. Her whole

nature was rebelling against Phil's usurped mastery over all the details of her life, and yet, though it enraged her, it was the nearest approach to anything like comfort she knew. She was even afraid that if Stanislas, her lover, bade her go to the right, and Phil to the left, she would turn to the left, despising herself for her choice all the while. She wanted to go to her father as a refuge from Phil, and yet knew that, if ever Phil was to give up his course of tyranny, her life would feel empty for ever as it had never felt before. Anything seemed better than nothing—war better than the peace of neglected loneliness and unbroken inaction.

At last the long journey came to an end. She was a bad and inexperienced traveller, and, Mrs. Hassock having clearly managed to get left behind, had to depend upon Phil for getting through the troubles of an unfamiliar terminus at night-time. He put her into a cab, and took his seat by her side. She wished he had let her go home alone, but could not rebel against an attention that was natural in itself, though its motive might be that of a suspicious gaoler. At any rate, she did not rebel.

"I despise her," and "I hate him," would have been the spoken answers of Philip Nelson and Phoebe Doyle had they been questioned concerning their feelings towards one another. And yet he had been deliberately ruining himself for her sake, and was still risking worse than simple ruin, while she could not bring herself to be wholly afraid of anything, not even of her father, while the contempt of the man she hated was round her and present with her to guard her from love, and freedom, and all other good things. The night was dark, even for the close of a London winter,

and Phoebe, unused to its maze, and confused by the effects of a first return to its lights, its blackness, its odour, and its roar after a first absence, noticed nothing out of the way in the route that the cabman was taking for Harland Terrace. Indeed she was not heeding the way, but only thinking of the end. And if she had both known and heeded it, it was sure to be all right, since Phil was with her. Even when the cab stopped at last, she did not perceive at once that Harland Terrace must, during her absence in the country, have undergone an extraordinary change. Before giving her his hand to help her from the cab, he knocked at the door, and, as soon as it opened, led her in, without giving her a chance of looking round.

But, once within the narrow passage, she saw that Phil had not been bringing her home. It was apparently the close sour-smelling entrance of some third-rate lodging-house, altogether in keeping with the pert and slatternly servant-girl who opened the door, and who now stood staring, open-mouthed, at the fine young lady whom Phil had brought back with him. There was a look about the passage that reminded Phoebe of her old home, in its untidy arrangements as well as in its atmosphere; she could almost fancy that the great coat hanging from the hat-peg over the staggering umbrella-stand belonged to her foster-father the admiral. Things looked less poverty-stricken than in the old home, it is true, but even more slovenly than those with which her own hands had formerly been condemned to do daily battle.

Could Phil, even Phil, have been playing her a trick—did he, following out his rôle of arch villain, have carried her off, to some secret hiding-hole so that Stanislas might be unable to discover her? Was it all a part of a deep-laid plot—had he really saved Stanislas after all? She had read of such things, and of worse things; and though beginning to suspect there may be a good deal of doubtful truth written about what heroines feel, she could not doubt the truth of what she saw. Before the slow eyes of a man could have begun to ask questions, hers had taken in every detail—the cracked ceiling, the ragged floor-cloth, the dusty glass globe within which a gas-jet was leaping from blue into yellow and back again, the Tower of Pisa-like condition of the umbrella-stand, and the long black smut that reached from one corner of the maid-of-all-work's open mouth to the opposite eyebrow. Then she heard the

swish of the cabman's whip outside, and the start of the wheels. She was in Phil's power, and alone.

"Where have you brought me?" she asked, in a tone that made the servant-girl stare yet more widely. "What does this mean?" Strangely enough, she did not at that moment feel the least afraid of Phil. The revelation of his dishonesty broke the power of his spell. "You shall let me go, or I will——"

Alas! what?

"I don't know what you mean," said Phil coldly, and not so very much surprised at her outbreak. Folly seemed so natural in a fool. "I said I should bring you home, and I have brought you home. Go and tell your master," he said to the servant, "that I am come home. Say nothing about the young lady, do you hear? Is he in the parlour?"

"Lord, no, sir!" said the girl. "He's down in the scullery a-cleaning of the knives. I'll tell him. Hi!" she called out from the far end of the passage to the basement. "Here's the young gentleman that came here once before. And you'd better put on your coat and scrub yourself up a bit at the sink, because there's company."

It was quite true that the ex-Grand President was without his coat, and engaged in knife-cleaning. The fact is that wealth had its usual effect upon a man to whom it had come late in life; it had driven him to the most ingenious contrivances for finding something to do. As a man of position and capital, he had quarrelled with his political party, and was placed above the old drudgery of copying law papers, so that having read the money article and taken a stroll for health's sake, he was fain to seek the kitchen and the scullery for the sake of company. Maria, it is true, was not quite so intelligent a listener as Phoebe had been, but she was exceedingly good-natured, and quite free from any sort of nonsense about doing her own work in her own way.

"Phil again!" he groaned, as, in obedience to his housemaid's orders, he turned the tap over his fingers and plastered down his hair. "What's he come for now? He's like a regular infernal machine, that boy. If he only wanted money like the others I should know what to do; but he doesn't take a bit after my side of the family, not at all. Well, I must see him, I suppose; but I'll give Maria a hint to say, 'Not at home for a week,' if he comes exploding here again. Ah, Phil, my boy! delighted

to see you, I'm sure!" he said, as, still engaged in pulling on his coat, he entered the parlour. "But—— Holloa!"

At the sight of Phil's companion, he came to a full stop, so complete that it got in the way of his dressing; his left arm got entangled in its sleeve, and he had to remain at the doorway in a state of general dislocation.

"Oh, Lord!" he cried, vaguely aware that he had, as a matter of course, lied about Phoebe to his terrible son, but unable to remember exactly what the lie had been. "It's Phoebe come home!"

So this was what Phil had meant by bringing her home. Of course he must only have been acting in error, after all; but how was it credible that the only member of the house of Nelson who cared a straw about her should be the only one who did not know what she herself had meant by "home"? There were no home-like associations, except of the most unpleasant sort, to galvanise into life any dead and unnatural affection for the admiral, who had parted with her so readily for money down. And she would have been something less or more than woman had not her experiences of other homes gone far to disgust her with that of the first part of her own history, peaceful as it had been. She felt no impulse, so she obeyed none. And, for that matter, an embrace, considering the relation of the admiral to his coat, was physically impossible.

"Yes," said Phil, while Phoebe waited for things to explain themselves. "She is come home to stay."

"And what in the name of fortune has happened then? Is he dead—bolted—smashed up—broken down?"

"Never mind what has happened, father," said Phil. "I'll talk to you another time."

"That's all very fine——"

"You needn't be afraid," said Phoebe quietly. "Phil is quite wrong. I am not going to stay. I am going home. If the girl will get me a cab, I will go now."

"Certainly," said the admiral, struggling into his coat at last; "certainly, my dear, if you wish it. I'm hanged if I know what you're come for, if it's not even to tea, but as you must go, I suppose now's as good a time as to-morrow or yesterday. Maria," he called out, with his hand for a speaking-trumpet, "run out and get a cab, a growler, for the lady."

"Can't," cried a shrill voice from below, "I'm changing myself, and sha'n't be done

this half-hour. You'd better go yourself, you're always wanting something to do."

"All right—all right," shouted the admiral back again; "never you mind, I'll go." And, glad of a reprieve to think things over, he was hurrying out, when Phil took him by the arm.

"Father! You will not turn my sister out of doors?"

"I'm beginning to think," said Phoebe, "that you could not have quite understood what you were doing when you brought me here. I am going to my real father—to my real home. Do you understand now? You have no right to keep me here—I have no right to stay."

Phil did not answer her.

"What does she mean?" asked he.

The admiral sought support from the door-post, in a more uncomfortable frame of mind than he had ever thought to be since he had done with duns. He almost groaned. He remembered now that it was he who had accounted to Phil for Phoebe's disappearance by accusing her of a disgraceful elopement with Stanislas Adrianski, and he at any rate understood his son well enough to know what Phil thought of a lie. The son was the father's conscience: to be deceived, indeed, but always to be feared; and there was this about Phil Nelson, that his mere presence seemed to have the effect of making people see things as they really are. There was not another living being to whom the admiral would not have lied, without feeling the prick of a pin, twenty times a day; and now an innocent bit of expediency, for the sake of peace and quiet, looked like what it really was, and his feeble accusation of a girl whom he thought he had done with, uncomfortably like a cowardly slander. How was he either to confess or to conceal? Why had he been such an ass as not to tell Phil the whole story when the latter first came home? He forgot that a situation which now, in comparison with the present, looked easy when looked back upon, had seemed, in its own day, insuperable except by that innocent bit of expediency.

"She means——" began he. "Bother me, Phil, if I know what she means. Or if I know what you mean. Or if I know what anybody means," he went on, his voice rising higher and higher, as if he were working himself up into a fit of honest anger. "Look here. You say Phoebe's come to stay. Are you come to stay, too?"

"No," said Phil, sadly enough, "I don't

know where I'm going or what I'm going to do. But I'm not coming back home."

"Well, you know your own affairs best, my boy," said the admiral more complacently; "you always did, and you always will. I shouldn't wonder if you went to Australia some day. That's where I'd go if I was a young man. Upon my soul, Phil, if you were going to Australia, I'd put a twenty-pound note to your outfit, there. Think about Australia, my boy, and let me know. There, there, there. We'll be all right and comfortable, never fear. You'd better be off now, and I'll sit up and talk things over with Phoebe. The idea of my shutting my door on a girl that's ate of my bread and drunk of my cup for goodness knows how many years. I'll talk it all out with Phoebe, and then we'll never mention the subject again—never by so much as a word. We'll none of us ask any questions, and then we shall get no answers, you know. There, good-night, and God bless you. And think of Australia, you know. You're not so very far off, you know, when you're once there."

"Then that's all right, so far," said Phil. "And now I have done what I can. I'll see Dick, and the boys, and then—and I must have another talk with you, father, before I'm off for good, whether it's to Australia or wherever it may be. I did think of Botany Bay." He had already told his first lie, and he had now made his first joke; in justice to him, it was a grim one.

Things were going better than the admiral had feared. If Phil was really going to take his hint about taking his intensely uncomfortable moral perversities to the Antipodes, and meanwhile would consent to let Phoebe's escapade be forgiven and forgotten, he might wink, after a little while, at Phoebe's return to her real home, and trust to remain undisturbed for an indefinite time. It was really hard to be thus worried by his children, and by other people's children, during the afternoon—he did not call it evening—of his days.

Phoebe had been listening for the last few minutes without much heeding what she heard. What Phil might have to say to his father, or his father to Phil, could not really concern her, and she was, for once, clearly resolved to go home at once, unless downright force were used to prevent her. Surely if Phil had acted altogether in error when he brought her there, he should have instantly set matters straight instead of still treating her as if she were a prisoner and he her gaoler.

But something in the tone of his last words went deeper than her ears. And she felt, whether prisoner or no, that liberty may sometimes be less worth having than a struggle for liberty. Phil's departure would end the struggle, and give her freedom. But what then? A prison is a safe place, after all, and to hate somebody is better than to love nobody. She was out of love even with her own fancies, though she stuck to them still.

"I am going home," she said. "I am going now. Nobody need get me a cab. I'll walk till I find one, and my luggage can stay till it's sent for. Good-night, father—good-night, I mean. No, don't stop me now, Phil. It seems odd there should be anything you don't understand, but he will tell you, when I'm gone. You've not been good to me, though you've saved—and I couldn't be good to you. I suppose—I suppose we shall never see one another again. Good-bye."

It was the simplest and most womanly speech Phil had ever heard her make—indeed that she had ever made.

"There is something in all this," he said with angry impatience, "that I don't understand. What do you mean by your father—your home?"

"Oh, lord!" groaned the admiral. "The apple-cart's toppling now. I say, Phil, you come with me into the scullery, or somewhere, where we can talk in private; there's things I can't exactly mention before her."

"I think it will be best indeed," said Phil, sternly even for him. Strangely enough, he alone, of all the admiral's acquaintance, was the only one who believed, if not in his father's strength, yet in his father's truth and honour. And that belief was beginning to be shaken now, following the loss of his faith in Phoebe, as the leaves will fall with the broken bough.

"There's no need for that," said Phoebe, quite calmly, though she felt anything but calm. Why, when Phil had her in his power, should he talk of going away, and never seeing anybody again? "I'll tell you, as you don't seem to know anything about me. If you hadn't known, or had cared to know, I would have told you at Cautleigh Hall. It's all simple enough. I live at Harland Terrace. Phil, did you never ask what had become of me? Was my finding my own father nothing to you? Oh, I can hardly believe!"

"No," said Phil stubbornly. "I was

told, by strangers, that you are a Miss Doyle, from India. I knew that you had never been in India, and that your name is not Doyle."

"My father has been there; my name is Phoebe Doyle. Have you anything more to say?"

"What!" cried the admiral; "do you mean to stand there, and to tell me—me, that the old gentleman who came here and wouldn't tell his name, was Doyle—Jack Doyle? Ah, that accounts for no remittance this Christmas; but what am I saying? Lord, what an ass I've been! Doyle—Jack Doyle! Why, bless the girl, he's no more your father than I am; and what he wanted to saddle himself with you for, hang me if I know."

The admiral's outburst of astonished speech was not so imprudent as it seemed; though, when it was over, its over haste frightened him.

"Phil, I made a little mistake, don't you see; told you the wrong man, don't you understand? But that old gentleman Doyle—Jack Doyle! This is a queer world. And—oh, lord!" he exclaimed, overcome by the recollection of the lies he had told while selling Phoebe to the only man in the world who knew them to be lies. "What an ass I am, to be sure!"

"You told me," said Phil, "that Phoebe had gone——"

"I thought so—I thought so, Phil; don't name names before her, she mightn't like it, you know; I'm glad I'm wrong. You see, 'twas only with one of her fathers, after all; only one of 'em, you see. We're not going to ask any questions, you know—not before her. I'll explain it all to you, between ourselves, you know, my dear Phil, in the twinkling of an eye."

Phil turned away. The explanation was nothing, after all. Had she been proved twenty times over to be the daughter of a man named Doyle, that made it none the less certain that Stanislas Adrianski was her lover, that Stanislas Adrianski had been with her at Cautleigh, that a certain jewel had been stolen from Mrs. Urquhart, and that Stanislas had received it from Phoebe's hands. Why should a man who was not her father adopt her without even letting his name appear? Was this mysterious Doyle a tool of Stanislas, or was he the concealed captain of the gang? And then his own father's sudden and mysterious increase of wealth, and incomprehensible manner. Phil bowed his face in his hands to hide from sight

the legion of demons of mystery that rose before him. At last he had come face to face with more than he could bear. He had become the scapegoat of a gang of thieves.

"Come, my boy," said his father, taking courage to pat him on the shoulder, "cheer up, everything's all right now. But no questions, you know."

"No," said Phil. "None. I have done what I can. I—give in."

"Phil's a queer chap," said the admiral, with a nervous laugh, as soon as the street door closed behind his son. "He's a very queer chap, I may say. I'm glad to see you again, Phoebe; I am, upon my word. Why, you're quite a lady, and I do believe you've grown! I wonder who Maria thinks you are. Where in the world did you come across Phil? I'm vexed it's happened—very vexed indeed. Where on earth did you come across him—eh?"

"Cautleigh Hall. You say that—that——" she faltered in a low voice; but all at once she spoke with a firmness altogether foreign to her. "You say Mr. Doyle is not my father. Is it true?"

"Of course it's true. Fancy that fellow being Jack Doyle! and a man like that wanting to adopt—— But where did you say? Cautleigh Hall? In Lincolnshire, do you mean? And you've been staying down there? It's something more than a queer world. It's a queerer."

"Tell me, please, how you know Mr. Doyle is not my father."

It was as if some altogether new Phoebe was speaking now; perhaps the admiral was not altogether wrong in accusing her of having grown. But the growth was not five minutes old.

"Eh? There's something about you, Phoebe, that I shouldn't know if I met you in the streets of China. But I'll tell you, because I want to know why he thought you worth four thousand pounds. I've a right to know. You know how you came to me and the old lady. Jack Doyle was there when you came. And his story about his wife was a—bang. And it's queer, very queer, you should have been staying at the Bassetts', because one of the Bassetts was a pal of Doyle's, and it isn't likely Jack Doyle would get taken up by Charley's friends. Quite the other way. It's a coincidence, that is——"

"I don't know why I should be bought and sold, like a slave," said Phoebe, but without a sign of anger. "I don't see why anybody should want me. Even—"

even Phil didn't care to know—— Sir Charles Bassett and my father—I mean Mr. Doyle—were old friends.”

“Bless my—what! Do you mean to tell me that Charles Bassett, young Charley Bassett, who kept in Gray's Inn, has become Sir Charles Bassett of Cautleigh Hall? On your oath—I mean, are you sure?”

“He knew Mr. Doyle, and I have heard him talk of living in Gray's Inn. Well, I know everything now; and I'll go home. I suppose I may have a cab, now that Phil's gone?”

“A cab? Certainly, my dear. A what? Oh, a cab—a cab; fifty if you please. I'd never thought of a chance like that—and such a lot of good lives, too.”

“Why do you suppose Mr. Doyle wanted me?”

“I don't suppose anything, my dear—I know.”

“You know——”

“That I'm an ass, my dear. But it's better to be an ass than a knave. But—all the same—it's never too late to mend.”

“No father—no brother—no lover—no friend—no enemy any more,” sighed Phoebe silently. “Nothing but myself for all the rest of my days. Will you let me thank you for taking care of me while I was a child? I'm not one now.”

“What will the Robespierres say! And I knowing all their secrets—it's positively awful. It convinces me of the existence of Providence, if I hadn't been sure of it all along.”

“Even he doesn't remember I'm in the room,” sighed Phoebe again. “May I have a cab before any of the boys come home?”

“Holloa, Maria! Tumble up! A whole cabstand for Miss Doyle!”

“Not for Miss Doyle,” said Phoebe; “only for me.”

A SCHOOLMASTER IN THE TRANSVAAL.

Two years ago I was travelling on horseback through a part of the country which was unknown to me. I had arrived rather late at the house of a well-to-do Africander farmer, who gave me a hearty welcome, told me to tie up my horse under the trees of the garden, and ordered his boys to give him as much forage as he wanted. “I am sorry I can't put him in the stable,” he said, “but you're the second arrival this evening. There's a little French fellow in

the dining-room now, who has got four horses to his “spider,” and precious fine horses too, and they have filled the stable.”

After seeing my horse blanketed and fed, I joined the party in the dining-room. It was a cheerful-looking room, the faces in it were pleasant, and there was a good supper of meat and hot scones on the table, whilst a tea-tray with all its paraphernalia lay before the kindly hostess. When I said that the faces were pleasant, I ought to have excepted one of them, that of the Frenchman. He was a short thick-set man, with short cropped black hair, very black eyebrows, bead-like black eyes, and a black moustache. His jaw was heavy and square, and the expression communicated to his face by this conformation somewhat contrasted with the vivacity of his manner. My host's wife and three daughters, ranging from about ten to sixteen, completed our party.

It is very refreshing to come across an English Africander in one's journeyings. Not only the language, but all the surroundings in the house remind one of home, and there is an air of refinement amongst them unknown to the Boers.

On this occasion, however, the conversation was conducted in Boer patois, for the Frenchman could speak no English, and the Africander no French. As I listened to the little man I wondered where he had learned his patois. He spoke it fluently but with a most curious accent, and used very coarse expressions, more so than an ordinary Boer would generally indulge in.

He told us that he had lost his way, that he was an hotel-keeper in Port Elizabeth, and that he was driving through the Transvaal in order to see whether it would be likely to be a good field for speculation. His account of whence he had come, and whither he was going, when he lost his way, struck me as curious, and I thought he shuffled when I remarked upon its singularity. He told us that he had been one of the defenders of Paris during the Franco-German war, and said that he had been six years in Port Elizabeth. I remarked that it was curious that he had never learnt English, but he assured me that it did not come in his way to hear it much spoken, as he traded mostly with the Boers.

We then adjourned to the sitting-room, in which there was a piano. I asked whether the eldest girl could play, and

after a little hesitation she opened the instrument and performed a simple piece of music with considerable taste, after which she and her sister played a duet. The piano was not at all bad.

Mine host now asked me if I could play, upon which I sat down and played the Marseillaise. I thought it would be a treat to the Frenchman. I took a sidelong glance at him before I finished; he was listening as phlegmatically as if it had been an ordinary song. Then I doubted his veracity, for what Frenchman who had fought on the ramparts of Paris but would have felt his heart swell at hearing the fine old tune in a far and foreign land.

"You know that well," said I, turning to him as I ended.

He replied in the affirmative, but as if puzzled by my remark.

After a time the conversation flagged, and soon there came a short silence, then my host and hostess began talking to each other in English.

I now spoke to the Frenchman in French. He started slightly, and looked at me without speaking.

"Is that French that you are talking?" asked the youngest girl, a bright-eyed mischievous-looking child.

"Yes."

"Why don't you speak French to the gentleman?" she asked, turning to the Frenchman. "We all want so much to hear how it sounds."

A gleam of intelligence passed over the man's face.

"I have made a vow not to speak a word of French for six months, so as to perfect myself in Dutch," he explained.

But I saw clearly that he did not understand what I had said to him. His host and hostess pressed him in vain to speak his own language, if only to say one word, but he persistently refused, and got quite excited in the maintenance of his absurd story of the vow he had taken. Shortly after he retired to his bedroom, and was so confused that he forgot to wish any of us good-night.

"That is a queer fellow," said the farmer when we heard him close the door of his room. "I wonder what and who he is—his story is an odd one."

"He is not a Frenchman, whatever else he is," I remarked; "I know that for certain," and I explained the reasons I had for making the assertion.

"I can tell you another thing," said the farmer; "he has not come from where he

says he has. I spotted a great many mistakes he made. It's not an easy matter to take in so old a bird as I am. Why, man! I know every inch of every road in the country for miles and miles, right down to the old colony, or anywhere you like."

"And look at that box," broke in the youngest child; "who ever saw such a box as that for a man to travel with. He has no other baggage but that little bit of a box, and just feel how heavy it is."

"You're just about right, young 'un," assented her father; "it ain't got clothes in it. It might be chock full of sovereigns by the weight, and he's precious sharp in looking after it too;" and he glanced at a small but strong wooden trunk that stood by the piano.

"And did you remark," said mine hostess, "that he talked as if he had learnt Dutch amongst the lowest Kaffres rather than amongst the Boers?"

"Yes," said her husband; "but he has a queer foreign or affected way of talking as well."

"I believe he is a Colony Boer, and has been working at the diamond fields, and has been in very low company, mixing a great deal with the Kaffres there. You can see he is a nasty sort of fellow," said the wife; "and that he is shamming. He did not expect to meet anyone here who could speak French, and so he thought he could safely say he was a Frenchman. You may depend on it that he has got something he wants to conceal."

With this we all retired to rest. My bed was made up on a sofa in the sitting-room.

Early the next morning the so-called Frenchman spanned his horses in, and, placing his box under his seat, departed. He had a small Hottentot boy with him as his only attendant. He was very careful to ask his way, and very much obliged for all the kindness he had received. I bade my kind entertainers good-bye shortly after, and resumed my journey.

Not very long after this occurrence, I happened to be paying a flying visit to a Boer family, whose farm was at no great distance from one of the numerous roads that lead to and from the diamond-fields. I had arranged to pass the night at this house, and we were rather a large party, as all the different members of the family gathered in the common sitting-room. Pipes and coffee were in full swing, and so was the ponderous conversation about oxen and rates of transport, diversified with the

puzzle-headed politics which are common in Boer houses.

A diversion, however, was suddenly caused by one of the youngsters saying, apropos of nothing:

"Father, the spook is still in the poort"—the "spook" meaning the ghost.

"What?" I exclaimed; upon which the youngster repeated his remark, and I learned that for some time past a ghost had haunted a certain poort through the neighbouring hills. He did not seem to be a visible ghost, but several of the assembled company averred that they had, on various nights, heard unearthly noises in the pass, and that no horse could be induced to go through it.

My curiosity was aroused, and I declared my determination to go and interview the spook if possible.

A Boer is not generally truly brave at heart, but no man can enjoy seeing what he considers bravery exhibited by another more than a Boer does, hence great were the encomiums showered on me by those assembled.

My horse was forthwith saddled, and my host himself offered to show me the way to the haunted poort.

The night was pitch dark; there was not even a star to be seen through the heavy canopy of clouds that overhung us, and we could not attempt any pace faster than a walk; but my guide knew the veldt well, and our nags were sure-footed and alive to the necessity of being on the look-out for holes, so we got on better than might have been expected, until the hills, which at first seemed like a black wall in front of us, began to take shape, and I heard the gurgling of the river which made its way through the poort. There was no road, only a bridle-path but little used, and the horses slipped and scrambled as they dipped to the sharp descent which was to lead us to the only ford, at the other side of which a narrow and stony path wound along through thick brushwood and under overhanging rocks and trees.

At that moment a most unearthly cry, something between a moan and a yell, rang through the silence of the night.

"You hear it!" gasped my companion, with difficulty mastering his horse, who had swerved and tried to turn sharp round. "I can go no farther!"

At the same instant his horse wheeled, and in doing so struck mine. The animal, already startled, reared, and when I had mastered him I found myself alone.

I now bethought me of what I was to do. My horse was thoroughly frightened, and I did not like the idea of forcing him down the steep bank into the stony bed of the river, only to have him possibly still further terrified when his footing would be insecure at the opposite side. There was evidently something mysterious about the cry, for it was not the cry of any wild beast, and I thought I should be likely to find my poor horse rather in my way if I wished to fathom the mystery. I therefore determined to take him a little way back, and, if I could not find the Boer who had accompanied me, to leave him to his own devices whilst I engaged in my adventure. I hallooed aloud, and presently heard a response. My friend had got a long way off, but after some very loud conversation, he was induced to approach the dreaded spot and take charge of my horse. He told me that if I was determined to go on, he would fetch some of the men from the house, and that they would make a fire at a little distance and wait for me.

Taking my rifle, a small revolver, and a little lamp with me, I started once more. The water reached nearly to my knees as I waded through the river; but I had strong riding-boots on and I cared but little. Just as I reached the bank there arose once more that weird cry. It seemed to come from above, from around me, and there was something so unearthly, so mournful, so despairing in the sound, that even whilst I told myself that my senses were deceived by the echoes of the surrounding hills, I felt my blood curdle.

I stopped when I reached the top of the bank. Thick darkness was around me and solemn stillness. I waited thus for about a quarter of an hour, until my heart beat painfully with suspense and a vague awe. Then again came that mournful wail.

This time I thought that I could localise it. It seemed to proceed from the hillside above me. Pushing the brushwood aside I crept stealthily upward, sometimes slipping, sometimes crawling on hands and knees, often pausing to listen, but all was still save for the rippling of the water below. At last the cry rang out again, I was on the right track! My breath came quickly from suppressed agitation, but I still crept forward and upward. I was near to the rocky summit of the hill now. Suddenly I heard a low moaning. I paused, then stealthily approached the spot whence it proceeded. It was so dark under the brushwood that I could see nothing, and

pistol and rifle would alike have been useless in case of danger, but I had unsheathed my hunting-knife and held it in my hand. There was a rustle, a rush, and the next moment I was rolling in mortal struggle with some fierce creature down the hillside. I gave it one desperate thrust with my knife, and wrenching myself loose I heard my enemy crash through the bushes, until a yell of pain and rage mingled with the thud of a heavy body falling on some projection that had arrested its downward course. This time I knew that the cry was from some animal in distress. Scrambling to my feet I lit my lamp, and by its feeble ray I groped my way along the track of the creature's fall, until I saw, caught on a tangled mass of roots of trees that had been torn away in some long past storm from whence they grew, the shape of a large gaunt dog, the picture of famine and despair. Blood was trickling from a deep wound in his side, and blood was dripping from his jaws where he had been lacerated by the thorns and stones he had rolled through and over. As the gleam of my lantern caught his haggard eye he raised his head, and fixed on me a look of defiant woe and desolation which I shall never forget.

Then I spoke to him, and the defiance melted away, he even let me touch him and staunch the blood issuing from the wound I had inflicted. At that moment I realised the agony animals must often feel at not being able to speak to us. That dog had a story to tell, and could only look at me with his pathetic eyes, and I felt sure that he was dying.

Pulling off my coat and shirt, I tore the latter into strips, and bandaged his wound as well as I could. I placed the lantern beside him so as to convey the idea to him that I meant to come back, and as I caressed him before leaving him he licked my hand.

Then, taking the sound of the water for my guide, I made for the ford as quickly as I could.

When I reached the impromptu encampment of the Boers, I found them in great excitement. My story served only to bewilder them, but they acquiesced in my proposition that we must try to save the dog, if only to endeavour through him to fathom the mystery which still clung to my adventure.

It was near dawn now, and I suggested that two of them should accompany me when I returned to the dog, whilst the others should return to the farm and

arrange some sort of litter on which the poor beast could be removed from where he lay to quarters more likely to conduce to his recovery.

By the time my two companions and I reached the scene of my night's work, the day had broken, and the heavy mist was beginning to rise.

The dog was still alive and wagged his tail feebly in acknowledgment of my presence. He seemed better after he had lapped some water which I brought for him in a pannikin I had borrowed from one of the Boers, and out of which they had been drinking coffee which they had brewed to keep up their spirits during their midnight watch.

I then proposed to my companions that we should search the spot where I had first encountered him, for it appeared to me that he must have been a self-constituted guard of something, which I suspected would prove to be a corpse. Acting on this suggestion we toiled through the brushwood until, close to the foot of the rocks which crowned the summit of the hill, we at last discovered a spot where, half buried in the earth, lay the mouldering form of a Kaffre. The body had evidently been buried carefully, but the ground had been scratched away, doubtless by the poor dog. The skull of the corpse was beaten in, apparently by some heavy instrument, and there were old stains of blood on the shirt. My companion told me that the path through the wood was a little used short-cut on the road to the diamond-fields, and our supposition was that the poor fellow had been murdered and robbed on his return from working, and perhaps from pilfering diamonds there. If so, his love for riches had cost him dear. There was nothing on him to identify him by.

As soon as the men came with the litter we got the dog on to it, and took him to the Boer's house, where I undertook his cure, my host having hospitably given me an indefinite invitation. After finding that it was only a Kaffre's corpse that was in question, their interest as to tracing the murderer ceased entirely, and I went by myself with a spade to cover up the remains of the poor fellow. My interest in the dog amused my host greatly, but I must say that they tolerated the inconvenience that I gave them in a most amiable manner.

The poor animal recovered much more quickly than I expected, and became greatly

attached to me. As soon as he could run about I tied him up whenever he was not in my sight, for once I caught him in the act of making off to the poort, and as soon as he could travel I took him away with me.

Some time after I was travelling in the Rustenberg district, and halted at the house of a well-to-do Boer. I had my waggon with me, but was riding in front of it; the dog accompanied me. The Boer told me where I could outspan, and asked me to come and have a cup of coffee and a chat after I had seen the oxen unyoked. As I had ridden up to the door, I had noticed a man walk quickly into the house, and I also remarked that "Watch," as I had named the dog, seemed very uneasy.

After seeing to the outspanning of the waggon I returned to the house with Watch, and sat down with the Boer and his wife. Two little boys were poring over their well-thumbed lesson-books in a corner. Watch disturbed their equanimity by sniffing at them.

"He won't bite," I said; "he is a very good-natured dog, although a very good guard;" and, indeed, after smelling all round them in a provokingly personal way, such as I had never seen him indulge in before, Watch left them, and walking to where I sat elevated his head in the air, and gave vent to a prolonged howl.

"What the deuce is the matter with your dog?" asked mine host, laughing.

I felt uncomfortable, for his proceeding seemed unaccountable, when, turning from me, he approached a door leading to an inner room, sniffed at all the chinks, and then began scratching up the mud floor under it, giving short impatient whines and yelps.

"He wants the schoolmaster," laughed mine host, whilst I collared Watch and dragged him off struggling to the waggon, where I chained him up and left him, despite his mournful howls.

My suspicions, however, were aroused, for I was always expecting the dog to recognise someone, and on my return to the house I asked whether there was anyone in the inner room.

"Yes," said the Boer; "my boy's schoolmaster has that room; he got me to put up the door to it expressly for him. I believe your dog has frightened him, for he won't come out to see you. Here, schoolmaster, come out. The dog's tied up, man." But a voice from within said that its owner felt ill and was lying down. "Zounds!"

said the Boer, "you've got ill in a great hurry! What's the matter with you? Let me in." But the unseen schoolmaster answered that his head had been aching fearfully all the day, and that now he thought a little rest would set him all right.

"Fever, I suppose," quoth mine host. "Well, we'll leave him alone, and enjoy ourselves without him."

Rain came on and I decided to spend the night where I was. In conversation I learned that the schoolmaster was a Russian, and had come to the Boer's house on foot, and seeking for employment, a short time before. I managed to elicit a description of the man, and it struck me that he must greatly resemble the mysterious Frenchman. Later on in the evening I told the story of my dog to the Boer, and told him also how anxious I was to be able to trace the curious chain of events of which it formed a link.

"That is spoken rightly," acquiesced mine host. "I tell you what, man, we must have the schoolmaster out and see him with the dog. He's a clever chap, but somehow I distrust him." With this he knocked at the closed door. "He sleeps well," he cried, redoubling his knock, but still there was no answer. "Fannee," said the Boer then to one of the boys, "run round and try if you can see what he's up to through the little window."

A moment after the boy opened the closed door. "Pa," he exclaimed, "the schoolmaster is not there, and the frame of the window is broken. I entered through it."

It was true enough. The night was dark, and trusting to its cover the man had escaped.

We made all search the next morning, but beyond a few foot-marks in the wet ground we could find nothing. He had taken a small bundle of clothes with him and whatever money he had.

And now to end my story, for it is not possible for me to complete it, as I can only draw my own surmises as to the real state of the case.

A few months ago my dog was lying by my side at my camp fire when a man who had spanned out close to me sauntered over, and entered into conversation. After a time he spoke to Watch, and flinging himself beside him rolled him over in play and caressed him, then looking up at me, he asked me where I got him. I told him the story.

"Then I am right," he said; "I thought I knew that queer black mark on his belly

and the white tip to his ear. You'd seldom see two such marks on two dogs alike in other respects. This dog belonged to a Kaffre who did the most daring stroke of robbery ever done on the diamond-fields. He was a noted sharp fellow, and he was noted too for being very fond of his dog, which is a good one, as you know. The animal was stolen from him, I don't know how, just before he jumped four splendid diamonds from the claim he was working in, and which belonged to a friend of mine, and bolted. I never knew what became of the man or the dog, but I can see daylight now. That dog broke loose from whoever had stolen him, and followed his master's track till he found his grave and dug him up."

I think the explanation a good one. The way in which I fill up the story is this.

The man whom I call the Frenchman frequented some low canteen at the diamond-fields which was a house of call for the Kaffres working there. He came to know Watch's master, and, finding him to be a sharp fellow, concerted some scheme of robbery with him, or entrapped him into some admission that he meant to rob his employer and bolt. He then resolved to follow him and rob him of his gains, but being fearful of the dog, determined to get the animal out of the way. He therefore stole him, and afterwards sold him to some person who was leaving the diamond-fields, his greed for money inducing him to adopt this course rather than that of killing the creature. Having perpetrated the murder and taken possession of the diamonds, he disposed of them for money in some dodgy manner, and, always fearful of detection, trumped up the story he told to me, when, having bought a trap and horses, and having put his money in a box, he determined to clear out of the country. On finding himself detected at the Africander's house, however, he got frightened and altered his plan. Burying his treasure in some safe place, he sold his horses and trap, and tried to cause all trace of himself to be lost by tramping to the Ultima Thule of the Transvaal and engaging himself as a tutor to a Boer there. I cannot account for what he did with the Hottentot boy he had with him, and who would have been almost certainly a witness of the burial of the box, or, if not a witness, would have known of its sudden disappearance. It was very heavy; still a strong-set man might have carried it on his back for a short way and have buried

it during the night without assistance. The dog in the meanwhile broke away from whoever had him, ran back to where he had been stolen from, and thence tracked his master to his grave. During the day the animal slept and hunted for small game, returning at night to mourn over and guard all that remained of the man he had loved better than he deserved, and in some way reasoned out to himself that the murderer of his master and the man who had sold him into bondage were one and the same. I have never been to the diamond-fields; if ever I go there, I shall endeavour to verify my suppositions.

TWO PORTRAITS.

I BAR the door on friends to-night,
And sit me here alone, apart,
By mine own hearth-fire, red and warm,
While round the house an angry storm

Blows, wild with wind and rain;
I sit me down alone to fight
A silent battle with my heart,
While yet the strife is not in vain.

Two pictures in my hand I take,
It is with these I have to do;
The face of one is passing fair,
The other sweet beyond compare,
And both have tender eyes;
One pair as placid as a lake
That mirrors heaven's own tender blue,
And one as dark as midnight skies.

I turn me first unto the face
That holds my manhood in its thrall;
The reddest rose cannot eclipse
The perfect crimson of those lips,
That seem with smiles to stir;
The soft black tresses interlace
Upon her forehead white, and all
That lovely is unites in her.

My soul goes down before that smile,
Before the magic of those eyes;
Hot pulses set my cheeks aflame
If but a stranger speak her name;
The clasping of her hand—
The hand I held in mine erewhile—
Hath power to bid emotions rise
That put me past mine own command.

Yet looking on that face to-night,
By this red hearth-fire here apart,
My soul becomes a prey to doubt,
My nature's better part speaks out
With solemn warning voice,
"Yield not thyself to false delight,
That rose hath thorns to wound thine heart,
Pass on, and make a nobler choice."

The red lips wear a mocking smile,
Alas! I fear me, holy prayer
Hath never passed those portals through,
Since pleasure dried the childish dew

They wore in far-off years;
The melting eyes with lure and wile
Peep out from clusters of her hair,
But never soften into tears.

The hand that lightly holds the rose
With such a free imperious grace,
Hath it been ever raised to lift
The poor from out the mire, to gift

The wretched with relief?
Alas! I know, and she too knows,
She is not worthy of my race,
And yet I love her to my grief.

She is not meet to stand beside
 My mother, in mine ancient home,
 She is not pure enough to rear
 An heir unto my father's heir,
 And yet my weak heart clings
 About her, rocked on passion's tide,
 Like some lost boat on ocean's foam,
 Far out of sight of better things.

I turn me to the other face—
 My mother's—framed in silver hair;
 Oh, lady! tender, brave and true,
 With smiling in those eyes of blue,
 Upon whose life benign
 Fell never shadow of disgrace,
 I may have given thee cause for care,
 But not for shame, dear mother mine!

No, not for shame, not yet, not yet;
 Oh, mother! in the bygone years,
 When by thy side my book I spelt,
 When at thy knee I trusting knelt,
 And spake the holy Name;
 I might be doomed to bring regret,
 To strike the bitter fount of tears,
 I was not meant to bring thee shame.

Nay! let me rather to the grave
 Go childless, when my day is done,
 And let the home of my old race
 Become a stranger's dwelling-place,
 Before I weakly share
 The life my noble mother gave,
 With one unworthy of her son,
 Though beautiful beyond compare.

I am but bound as Samson was,
 With "seven green withes" of passion's growth,
 The secret of my strength I kept,
 Though my Delilah prayed and wept,
 And I can break apart
 Her bonds, like swaths of summer grass;
 And be she tender, be she wroth,
 Take from her hold my captive heart.

Two pictures lie within my gaze,
 I turn me from the fairer face,
 The choice is made, my mother dear,
 Thou hast no shame from me to fear,
 I break the charmer's spell;
 I turn my feet from dangerous ways,
 From luring eyes, from fatal grace,
 And bid false love a long farewell!

HOLLYGROVE HOUSE.

A MYSTERY.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"It's a snug little box. Two meets within easy distance, good garden, though a little out of order, pretty lawn and half-a-dozen acres of good cover behind; I think I've done a good stroke of business in securing it."

Charlie Severn flipped away the ashes of his cigar as he spoke, looking very well pleased with himself and his bargain. I envied him—six-and-twenty, on the eve of being married to the best and sweetest little girl in England, heir to ten thousand a year, and the kindest soul in existence. We, his old companions, had given him a farewell dinner, and now, most of the guests having departed, Templer and I, his two most intimate friends, were enjoying a final

smoke and chat before separating for the night.

"Etty calls the place gloomy," he went on. "But Paradise would have looked gloomy the day we ran down to inspect it. It was one of those horrid days last week. There was a north-easter blowing fit to take your head off, with a sprinkling of snow coming down along with it. I confess it did look bleak, but I'll have things put to rights before she sees the house again, and you know you fellows are coming down to help us to make the place jolly."

I said I hoped to be able to have a look at his new abode.

"But you know, Charley my boy, my leave is up on the tenth of January, so I shall not have much time to spare."

Charlie's face fell, then lighted up again.

"Look here, old boy, what's to prevent your coming back from Redfern with us?" he asked. "Cissy and Kit are coming. Templer's booked for the dance in Christmas week, and so are you. We'll all go over to Hollygrove in a body, and be a jolly party."

Now "Etty," Charley Severn's bride, was Ethelberta Redfern, second daughter of the late Sir Francis Redfern, Baronet, of Redfern Park, Westhamshire, by Augusta his wife, only daughter of the Marquis of Fetherlands, while "Cissy" was Cecil Victoria, third daughter of same noble pair, and "Kit" meant Kathleen Maguire, the sweetest and most fascinating of Irish girls, niece to the deceased baronet. Now I beg to state that I am not prone to rave about young ladies, being an old stager, lean, grizzled, brown as a walnut, and twice her age, but I acknowledge that a sweeter maiden than this Kathleen Maguire it has never been my fate to behold, and if—

"Shall we cry 'settled,' old boy?" Charley said. "Templer is bound to come—eh, Tim?"

Now Percival Templer, known to his chums as "Tim," was, as I well knew, ready to go to the cannon's mouth for a glance from Cissy Redfern, so was I to spoil sport? I said "settled," and we separated. I saw Charley turned off next day; I believe the wedding was considered rather a smart affair, but to me it went off tamely enough. Kit was given in charge to a lanky youth, a brother officer of her cousin, Sir Albert Redfern, and I never got near her.

There was a dance in the evening, a very

brilliant thing, too, considering the time of year, but the room was so crowded that dancing was almost impossible. I had a turn or two with Kathleen, and a few minutes' chat on the stairs afterwards, but her cousin kept hovering round her the whole time, and I felt that I was in the way. It was a relief when, supper over, I felt at liberty to return to my lonely lodgings, to muse upon the good fortune which seems to shine upon some young men.

The Redferns left town the day after the ball, and I, finding London intolerably dull, went off with Templer to his father's place in Loamshire for a little quiet hunting with the Loamshire hounds. It was slow work. Templer's father is a widower, and all his daughters are married, so that Monkshampstead was a dreary place to stop at. Nevertheless we managed to get through the time fairly well; we hunted five days in the week, shot on the sixth, and looked at the horses on the seventh, and, in spite of awful weather, rain, sleet, snow, sharp frosts, and still sharper thaws, we got on fairly well, although it was a great relief when Christmas came, and it was time to go to Redfern.

I suppose everyone knows that Redfern Court is in Westhamshire, and that Lady Augusta is the queen of the county. A great lady even in London, she is the undisputed ruler in her county, and a very graceful queen she makes. Redfern is the pleasantest house I ever had the good fortune to find myself in. There are lovely gardens, beautiful even in winter time, delightful walks through beautiful stretches of woodland scenery, a capital ground for a cosy flirtation, if one were so disposed, and at the back of the house there are splendid tennis-courts, asphalted, laid down by first-rate men from town, for those who are enthusiasts about the game. Yes, I enjoy a day or so at Redfern.

Had I expected too much, or had Redfern made things square with Kit, or what was it that was amiss with us all? I cannot tell, I only know that I felt worried and out of sorts from the first day I arrived.

Kathleen avoided me. If I entered the morning-room while she was there she invariably found a pretext for leaving it shortly afterwards. If Lady Augusta entrusted her to my charge at dinner—she often did—the girl would scarcely speak to me. I did not understand her; women have always been an enigma to me. For-

merly I let them remain so. Now, I candidly confess, I wanted very much to unriddle this one, and she baffled me. The day after we arrived Charley and his bride returned, both of them seeming happy enough to drive one distracted with envy. That was on Christmas Eve, and their happiness seemed to brighten us all up.

Christmas Day was a pleasant enough festival. There was a big dinner-party, and a dance in the servants' hall, but the festivities were of necessity cut short at midnight, next day being Sunday, when all gaieties were strictly prohibited.

We were to leave Redfern Court on the Thursday after the ball; Severn, his young wife, Cissy, and Kit going by an early train, so as to be at Hollygrove to welcome us—that is to say, Templer, Redfern, and myself. Strange to say, on the morning of our departure, I felt more than half inclined to give up my visit, and set off to my good old mother at Cheltenham; but then I did not like to cut Charley, even although I was suffering rather severely, for I need not try to conceal the real state of the case. I was head over heels in love with Kathleen, and at my time of life that means more than a boy's passing fancy for a pretty face. I knew she did not care for me, but still there was a certain fascination about her which drew me on and on. That she did care for Redfern I had no manner of doubt, but, although he hung round her and paid her very devoted attention, I had my suspicions as to the genuineness of his affections. I think I had a vague idea of saving her from him in some unknown way. At any rate I had no very kindly feeling towards the young man as we sat side by side in a smoking-carriage, dashing along the dreary snow-covered expanse of country which lay between Redfern and Hollygrove.

Twilight was closing in as we gained the little wayside station, where Charley awaited our coming in all the first freshness of his new character of host. He greeted us as if some months, rather than a few hours, had elapsed since we parted, and whirled us along a fairly good turnpike road in a neat trap, drawn by a pair of spanking grey horses. The house was a little over a mile from the station, and light enough remained for us to see a portion of it, as we drove up the avenue. It was a squat, square house, commonplace and conventional, only differing from all the other houses in West Loamshire in being built of dark grey stone. I think it was that

which made it look so gloomy, set as it was, too, in the depths of the holly-grove from which it took its name. For it was a gloomy house. Even the porch, full of brilliant blossoms, which was the first thing you encountered as you entered, failed to lighten up its gloom. There were tall dark yew-trees on the lawn in front; and a frozen fountain, like a miniature iceberg, in the centre of the gravel sweep did not tend to make the place more lively. But when we entered, and saw at the end of the long hall, a square of light and warmth, where three beautiful women were standing to bid us welcome, I began to think Holly-grove was not such a bad house after all.

Etty made a charming hostess. She had on a wonderful garment—a tea-gown, Charley called it—all loose and flowing, with a belt about her waist, and a “Gloire de Dijon” in her bosom. A most sweet picture she made. Cissy was very winsome too, but Kate—I only cast one swift glance at her—for Kate eclipsed them all, and there was a soft shy smile on her red lips as our eyes met. I felt a keen thrill of something that was not joy, neither was it pain, or hope, or fear, but a mixture of all, as I saw she was glad to see us. Well, if the worst came to the worst I should witness her happiness, and ought not that to be enough for me? The provoking thing was that Redfern did not seem to mind much. He was gazing round him, listening to Charley’s prattle about his house. I kept my eyes away and listened too.

“You see, this is the centre of the middle square. The stairs go up there,” he said, “on either side of that glass door. The long passage we came up is the outer hall, the bedrooms open off the gallery there, behind those pillars, and the cupola overhead is rather pretty. Its stained glass makes this place look awfully jolly when the sun’s shining.”

It looked comfortable enough now in all conscience. The ample hearth was piled up with blazing logs. The stone floor was covered by a great thick Turkey carpet, while every imaginable shape of lounge, easy-chair, and cosy sofa offered luxurious places for repose.

Lamps swung from the roof, and along the wide gallery supplied the place of the failing daylight and helped to warm its ample space. Opposite the entrance to the outer hall a glass door opened into a well-filled conservatory, and at my right hand, as I sat by the tea-table,

I saw into another lighted-up apartment through another door.

“That’s the drawing-room,” Charley said. “There is to be a smoking-room in the front part of the house, but those duffers of workmen have been so slow about it it’s not half finished, and the library is all at sixes and sevens. We’ll explore it to-morrow, and in the meantime we must make a smoking-room of the hall.”

Presently the dressing-bell rang, and then Charley conducted us to our respective apartments.

“Etty and I inhabit another part of the house,” he said, opening a door, and thereby disclosing a passage lighted up, like all the rest of the house. “There are two jolly big rooms down there,” he went on; “we thought we’d take possession of them, as Etty liked the view. This is your roosting-place.” He paused before a door at the west corner of the gallery, and flung it open. “Templer’s got the room opposite. Ciss, Etty’s given you the middle one. You, Kit, are quartered at the other side; you have it all to yourself, for Bertie sleeps at our end of the mansion. Bye-bye, boys and girls; do not keep the cook too long waiting, it’s not fair.”

We vanished into our respective rooms and began to dress—at least I did, but half-way through my toilet a most curious and unpleasant sensation came upon me. I cannot quite explain what it was like, I never felt anything resembling it before, and I most devoutly hope I never may again. It was not fear, no, I am certain of that, neither was it pain, although it seemed to send the blood back to my heart with a sickening rush. It was rather a dumb nameless horror of some awful unknown thing close at hand. I was working away at my hair with a couple of big brushes, when it first came upon me. I turned like lightning and looked carefully round, but nothing was to be seen. I was simply standing before a well-appointed dressing-table, in a luxuriously furnished room. A lamp burned on the mantel-shelf, a great fire roared up the wide chimney, candles were flaming on the table behind me, and the great cheval-glass reflected back only my own manly form, clad in shirt and trousers; yet the stifling sense of some dreadful presence near me, beside me, grew more and more appalling each moment, and a sort of cold clammy feeling came upon me. I seized a candle and went round the room, searching for it, whatever it might be. I flung open

the wardrobe doors. Nothing more terrible than a coat or two dangling from some pins met my view. Then I pulled the bed from the wall; nothing was to be seen, and with a laugh at my own folly I resumed the duties of my toilet. The feeling gradually abating, at last completely passed away, but, what struck me as being very strange, a cold damp air, accompanied by a singular and most disagreeable odour, seemed to float round the room. I confess my first thought was "drains," but yet the odour was not like that which proceeds from defective drainage. No; like a flash, the sickening smell recalled a scene thousands of miles away, when one hot sultry night I had inadvertently ridden too near one of those ghastly "towers of silence," which pollute the breathless air of the country round Bombay. I shuddered as the weird uncanny scene rose up in my memory: The tower, rising above the lonely cypress grove, a dark outline against the deep blue sky of an Indian night; the circle of obscene birds, gorged by their awful repast, showing darkly in the dim light; the ghastly noises they made, as the sound of our horses' feet disturbed their repose, and they rose up heavily on listless languid wings to flutter in the darkness like evil angels. This sickening smell recalled that night and turned me almost faint as I stood. Fortunately the sound of the dinner-bell aroused me, and brought me back to a sense of the actual state of things. I went out upon the gallery, and loitered there a moment or two, but no one appeared. I would hardly have confessed that I expected to meet anyone, and yet if Kit had happened to leave her room just then—— But she didn't, for she was in the drawing-room before me, and very sweet she looked. Severn was the only other person there. She was sitting on the hearthrug and talking very earnestly to him. He seemed interested in what she had to say.

"Here's Tottenham, ask his advice. He knows a little about Ireland," Severn said as I came near.

"My advice?" I said, looking down at her. "Would Miss Maguire care to act upon my advice?"

She blushed rose-red, and her blue eyes fell. Had my eyes told her anything?

"She has heard that things are going all wrong at her father's place in Ireland, and she wants to start off at once and see them all. To share their danger, she says."

"Very praiseworthy," I said, a curious thickening of the breath coming upon me. What a brave girl she was! "But I trust you will not be permitted to carry out your intention—you are safe here."

"Oh, but I should be perfectly safe there too," she said earnestly. "You see, I know the people; I am not afraid of them, only for papa and the boys. For myself I have not the shadow of fear. Not one of them would touch me."

"You are very brave."

"No, I am a dreadful coward," she laughed.

"Are you? I should never have thought it. Do tell me what you are afraid of?"

"Oh, many things; spiders, rats and mice, crawly things, caterpillars."

I do not know what tempted me to ask the question. Afterwards I was sorry enough for it.

"Do you include ghosts in your list of terrors, Miss Maguire?"

She shook her head.

"I don't know. I never saw one."

"Should you be afraid of seeing one?"

"I am not sure," she answered. "It would be a new experience."

"You are fond of new experiences?"

"Sometimes," she said, gathering herself up, and rising to her feet as the rest of the company came sweeping into the room.

"And yet," I said, bending towards her as she rose—"and yet the old are better sometimes."

She looked into my face, a swift questioning glance, and turned away.

"Bertie," cried Mrs. Severn, "for this night only we'll go to dinner in state. Give me your arm, Sir Albert Redfern; Mr. Severn, take Miss Redfern. Major Tottenham, will you bring Miss Maguire in to dinner?"

I obeyed her gladly and we trooped across the warm bright hall to the dining-room.

Everything was in capital order; the new cook was a first-rate one; the wines were good; the company pleasant. We were as happy a set of mortals as you could wish to find.

We had a little music in the evening. Etty played well, and sang sweetly. Kathleen sang, but did not play, while Redfern was an enthusiast about music. We had quite a small concert in one end of the room, Cissy, Redfern, and Templer doing audience, but I don't think they heard very much of the singing and playing.

It was lateish when we separated, nearly twelve o'clock, and as the last petticoat

vanished up the stairs, Severn roused the huge hall fire into a roaring blaze.

"Now we'll make ourselves snug, boys," he cried; "smoking-caps and dressing-gowns are to be the order of the night."

We were not long in equipping ourselves as he bade, and soon fragrant clouds were circling around us. We heard soft voices murmuring in the gallery, and a low musical laugh made us all look up to see a bright face peeping at us over the balustrade.

"All witches," cried Severn. "Etty, send those naughty girls to bed. We want to chat."

"Don't reveal any secrets if you take my advice," Etty's silvery voice called out of the shadow. "Cissy and Kit have only to leave their doors open."

Her voice died away in a smothered peal of laughter. We heard doors close, and then we knew we might chat away as freely as we liked.

We had many things to talk about. Redfern's horses were coming over next day, not that there appeared to be much chance of a thaw; but all the same, one never can count upon anything certain with regard to weather in this variable climate. There were woodcocks to be shot, if the frost continued, and Severn had discovered a capital sheet of ice in some corner of his meadows.

"I say, Tim, Cissy is dying to learn how to do the 'outside edge'; you can give her a lesson after breakfast," Severn said laughingly. And Templer reddened to the tips of his ears. "We'll all go down to the pond—— Hallo! here they are again."

We heard a door open, and yet the sound it made was not like that of the smooth gliding hinges of the doors overhead; this was a harsh grating noise as if a rusty lock was roughly turned and a heavy door flung open with a sudden jar; at the same moment a damp icy air swept down upon us, and the same disgusting charnel-house odour that had so startled me in my room came upon us with a rush. I felt the curious sense of an awful presence take possession of me, and looking awe-stricken into the faces of the three strong brave young men who sat with me, I saw by their expression that they shared my feelings. Charley sprang up.

"Those owls of workmen have been tampering with the drains," he said; "they have opened the door leading to the leads and forgotten to close it. Come, Bertie, we'll fasten it up."

We looked at each other, and with one consent we all went with Charley up the broad stairs, through a small door opening off the gallery, up a narrow flight of steps to the door which opened upon the roof. It was shut, and strongly secured.

"That's very odd," said Charley, as we stood looking from the closely-barred door into each other's puzzled faces. "I could have sworn I heard this door opened."

"And so could I," said Templer. "The cold air seemed to come down on us from it."

"Yes," Redfern added; "it was just the noise it would have made if those rusty locks had been opened suddenly."

"Well, no one seems to have been near it," Charley said in a tone of great annoyance. "I'll have it seen to to-morrow, if possible, and I will speak to Kent in the morning. I suppose the servants think they can play larks on us because we are such young housekeepers, but I'll teach them the reverse." I did not think Charley's handsome face could express so much anger or decision as it did at this moment. "I won't have her worried at any rate," he said, as we returned to the hall. "So now, lads, a final smoke and to bed."

I never could explain satisfactorily, to myself or to anyone else, the curious sensation of vague apprehension which was upon me, and which inexplicable feeling I saw reflected in the faces of my friends. Our attempts at conversation fell very flat after what had occurred. We were all thinking of it, and yet by common consent we tried to talk about other things, as we re-lighted our pipes and lounged about the hall. The unpleasant smell was gone, only a curious chill remained in the air.

"How bitterly cold it is to-night," Templer said; "no chance of a thaw."

We agreed with him, and then, as the hall clock struck one, we went upstairs, lingering in the gallery until Charley extinguished the lamps.

"Good-night and sound sleep to you, boys," he said, as we separated at the door of the passage leading to his wife's room. "You needn't say anything about that noise, or the drains, to any of the girls."

I readily promised, so did Templer, Redfern gave an expressive nod, and so we went to our rooms.

Although nothing further occurred, I did not pass a very tranquil night. Once or twice I started from my sleep with

the same vague horror upon me that I had felt in the evening, although in a much less degree, and I acknowledge I felt glad and relieved when I heard doors open, feet moving, mops and brooms in motion, and knew that it was morning, and the house astir.

BARTOLOZZI AND HIS TIME.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

IN a previous article we found Francisco Bartolozzi, painter, draughtsman, and line-engraver, arrived in England at the hey-day of the fashion for stipple-engraving. He had been "found" by Dalton, whose quick eye seems to have been accompanied by an acquisitive hand, for, so far as can be seen, he made a very good thing out of his Italian protégé. But the fish was far too heavy to be held very long, and the king's engraver had no choice but to relinquish a capture who knew his own value so particularly well. Towards the close of the Italian's engagement, his services were eagerly competed for. He began by engraving partly for himself and partly for the print-sellers, who bought his work eagerly. He received numerous commissions from the famous print-publisher, Alderman Boydell, whose services to art are fairly recognised in Mr. Tuer's work. To all who know anything of engraving, of modern art, and art collections, and sales at Christie's, few men are better known than Mr. Henry Graves, of Pall Mall, whose house is the lineal representative of that of Boydell and Co., started by John Boydell (afterwards Lord Mayor, in 1791-2) in Cheap-side in 1752. Boydell was an enthusiast, not a mere dealer. Instead of importing prints from abroad, he encouraged the production of plates at home, and, it is said, paid away, during his lifetime, as much as three hundred and fifty thousand pounds to artists and engravers, an enormous and almost fabulous sum at that time. Whether he disbursed this enormous sum or not, it seems absolutely certain that the enterprising alderman came to shipwreck over the illustrated edition of Shakespeare. A fight for life was going on in Europe, and people were too busy in making history to care for the "boets and bainters," as the warrior of Dettingen called them, who illustrate and adorn it. Doubtless our great-grandfathers would have bought Alderman Boydell's Shakespeare eagerly enough if they had not been

engaged in a desperate struggle to restore in France a rotten monarchy such as that which their own ancestors had shuffled off, not without trouble, a century before. But they were far too busy to think of buying prints, except, indeed, such caricatures as represented the French dancing the Carmagnole, or a little later, "Boney, the Corsican ogre," in the act of devouring crowns and nations, principalities and powers. It was in fact a time of strong feeling, earnest doubtless, but narrow. The mania for fighting the French in general, and Bonaparte in particular, excluded all other sentiments, and art as the most delicate product of civilisation was the first to suffer.

Up to the collapse of Boydell's fortunes, Bartolozzi seems to have fared very well so far as material prosperity, honours, and rewards were concerned. In 1769, the Royal Academy was founded, the original members being of course nominated, not elected, as all their successors have been. In that group, dominated by the great figure of Sir Joshua Reynolds, a place was found for Bartolozzi, but none for Sir Robert Strange, an omission which led to a noteworthy feud between Sir Robert and the friends of Bartolozzi, for to do the Florentine justice he never troubled his head about the matter. There had been a quarrel of long standing between Strange and Dalton, with whom Sir Robert naturally associated his nominee and protégé, Bartolozzi. Strange was a line-engraver of great skill, but when he attempted to draw was generally faulty. When the Academy was founded, it was not forgotten that he had accused Dalton and Bartolozzi of some underhand dealings in the matter of the Aldrovandi — "Sleeping Cupid." On pretence of buying the picture from Senator Aldrovandi for the King of England, Dalton had, it was asserted, obtained permission for Bartolozzi to make a drawing of it, and that this, instead of being sent to England for the king to look at, had been retained by the assumed confederates for the purpose of engraving. Whether Dalton admitted Bartolozzi to his confidence cannot be known, but as he was about to make hard terms with him, it is quite probable that he did not.

There was also an old debate between Dalton and Lord Bute on the one side and Sir Robert Strange on the other, concerning the engraving of two portraits of the king and of Lord Bute by Ramsay. Sir

Robert Strange eluded the request at last by going to Italy, and Dalton engaged Bartolozzi, in order to provide him with a rival. Meanwhile the task was performed by W. W. Ryland.

It was then a mighty pretty quarrel as it stood when the Royal Academy was founded, and the Court party seem to have proved too strong for Strange. The Royal Academician Engraver was not invented at the institution of the Academy, and Strange, despite his eminence in his profession, was denied the full rank of R.A., on the ground that he had never been a painter, and could, therefore, only be a member, if at all, in the subordinate capacity of an associate. This position he scorned. Bartolozzi had painted, and could draw, and therefore received full honours. He also sent in his "exhibition" painting and many subsequent pictures, but Strange subsequently derided these as the joint effort of Bartolozzi and his countryman Cipriani, familiarly called "Chip" by his London friends.

This onslaught was contained in a little work, written by Strange, and published in 1775, entitled, *An Inquiry into the Rise and Establishment of the Royal Academy of Arts*, to which is prefixed a letter to the Earl of Bute. By Sir Robert Strange, Member of the Royal Academy of Painting at Paris, of the Academies of Rome, Florence, and Bologna, Professor of the Royal Academy of Parma, etc., etc. In this pamphlet Strange denounced his rival and his clique in unmeasured terms, but Bartolozzi, remembering, probably, that he can afford to laugh who wins, paid not the slightest attention to the attack. In various newspapers the accusations of Strange were repeated and enlarged upon, but without producing any impression on the thick-skinned Italian, who kept on earning money and spending it at a great rate. It must have been additionally annoying to Strange that Bartolozzi should have been selected as the engraver of the plate for the Royal Academy Diploma — still in use. It is one of the engraver's finest works in line, and was executed from a design made by Cipriani at the special invitation of the committee on the establishment of the Academy, among the treasures of which the original drawing is preserved.

Bartolozzi exhibited at intervals at the Academy for thirty years, beginning in 1769, the year of its establishment, and ending in 1799, three years before he left

England for Portugal. During this period he resided at least at three places. His earlier domicile was at Mr. Forsyth's, in Broad Street, Carnaby Market; that is, far up Swallow Street, now Regent Street, and by Major Foubert's Passage, going towards Soho. From Broad Street, where the Brewery has since been a conspicuous building, he went to Bentinck Street, Berwick Street, next to Wardour Street, which has preserved a certain flavour of fine art. From Soho he migrated to North End, Fulham. In all these dwellings he earned and spent what was then esteemed a great deal of money. His studio was the haunt of fashionable idlers and real or sham patrons of art. He is said, his biographer observes, to have spent with Cipriani thirty pounds on a day's pleasure. How did they get through all this? one is tempted to ask, not without recollections of how much it costs to drive a few friends down to Epsom on the Derby Day, and to entertain them in fitting style at luncheon, together with their friends and friends' friends. There is not such a wild revel to be had for thirty pounds as commentators might induce us to believe. It is still more droll to read that "the general carelessness of Bartolozzi in the matter of money may be guessed from his habit of carrying gold loose in his waistcoat pocket." Now, the most careful man the writer ever encountered always carried gold loose in his waistcoat pocket. The careful gentleman mistrusted a purse, and with some reason. "If," as he explained, "you lose a purse, you lose all the money you have about you, and if you happen to be in a crowd, it is a purse that the pickpockets will seek for; but if you keep gold in your waistcoat pocket, and silver in your fob, they must take you up by your feet and shake you to get all your money."

If this authority be as sound in his reasoning as he seems to be, it no more follows that Bartolozzi was reckless because he carried gold in his waistcoat pocket, than that Napoleon was mad because he carried snuff there. But the engraver doubtless lived liberally, and worked very hard. As the incapable dullards of the world would say, he "worked like a horse and spent his money like an ass." Such persons always forget that to any human creature endowed with a spark of the genius whereof they are devoid, each of these proceedings gives almost equal pleasure to the genuine artist. He loves his work, and will work on in the full flush

and passion of it until he is quite exhausted, and then requires amusement of some kind, food, wine, friends, or all together. When the fine intellectual machine stops, it stops altogether, just as a thorough-bred racehorse stops dead when he has gone his distance. He has done his best; he has gone the length of his tether at his best pace, and can do no more. There are joyless people who cannot understand this, and will insist that regular spells of work and play produce better results. Opinion will always be divided on this point. Cold water and regular spells are in fashion now, but whether the work done is better or worse than that of Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney, Bartolozzi and Strange, Gibbon and Goldsmith, Sheridan and Burns, may be left to the decision of the reader.

Bartolozzi worked very hard, early and late. His lamp was seen burning by passers-by his house late at night and far into the small hours. He was, in fact, overpowered with work. He was a favourite with Boydell, and with many artists. But the grandfather of Madame Vestris, whose beautiful portrait by Chalon can never be forgotten, was a jovial soul, and like all the men of his time, including Pitt, could not get on without the bottle. There is a story told of him and Lord Craven which is worth repetition. He was engaged by Lord Craven, who was a brute and the husband of the beautiful and clever Lady Elizabeth Berkeley, who afterwards became Margravine of Anspach, to make an engraving from an East Indian design, for which his lordship agreed to give him two hundred pounds. Bartolozzi thought it a hard bargain, but as Lord Craven was by way of being a noble patron of art, and "his very good friend," undertook the work. Everything was arranged; the engraver was to work in the house, and dine at my lord's table. My lord speedily displayed his bad manners and that brutality, which made him the scoff of his peers until he departed this life to the great comfort of everybody belonging to him. The first day, after the bottle had passed, he showed the engraver into the working-room, and there left him. Bartolozzi's idea was that this was only a visit of ceremony to survey the field, and then return to his "bottle and friend," but feeling an after-dinnerish sensation come over him, he untied his neckcloth, spread it over his face, threw himself into the armchair, and went to sleep. Some two hours afterwards Lord Craven, anxious already to see the progress of the

engraver, went himself to call Bartolozzi to take coffee. Entering the room, he was surprised to find the engraver fast asleep, and snoring like the bass of his brother the musician's fiddle. His lordship looked round, and found that all was in statu quo. The engraver had not struck a stroke, upon which he shook him by the collar until he awoke him. The engraver was in a very ill-humour and asked fiercely:

"Why wake me when I was dream for your lordship's good?"

"My good!" bellowed Lord Craven; "why, Bartolozzi, why, man, you have not put a graver upon the plate."

Bartolozzi rose up and replied:

"Oh yes, my lort, all my engraving are there, laying upon de plate, and dere dey may lay and be——"

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Lord Craven. "Are you going mad?"

"Yes, vid vexation; you take me away from good table, lock me up in cold room, and I can't do things more worse than at my own house. You go back and trink and trink and eat de fruits, and den come to see vot I do in dis hungry dungeon. My lort, ven I vork I must eat, trink, and smoke at the same time; you send me mine bottle of port, mine shiggarr, and mine pishcuit, and I will do you; but I must have mine own things and mine own way, or tammee, I gif up de pargain."

This is what the biographer of Madame Vestris calls "a hint," adding that it was acted upon, and that Bartolozzi got on afterwards as well with Lord Craven as it was possible for any human being to do.

Bartolozzi was evidently a jovial soul, and of the opinion of an old friend of the writer, who, as an excuse for perpetual eating and drinking, insisted that he was like a locomotive engine, and required a constant supply of fuel. It may also be said, by the way, that in Bartolozzi's time everybody ate and drank profusely. The fine old English gentleman who drank the three bottles of port without other assistance than that of a bottle of Madeira was a contemporary of his, and the condition in which gentlemen joined the ladies in the drawing-room in those days might be generally described as "flushed." When it was possible for a man of moderate ability to win a fortune at cards by the simple expedient of dining on a boiled chicken and one glass of sherry, as the father of Mrs. Canning actually did, the other players must have been in a very hazy condition. It would thus be unfair

to the famous Italian engraver to judge him by the standard of to-day. He acted like other people who had good means, and "lived up" to them. It reads oddly enough now, almost as oddly as the cigar to be taken with the port wine, biscuit, and a profusion of snuff. Smoking in this country was confined to the company sitting round a punchbowl after a hunting carouse. Pipes were smoked on such occasions, but were never admitted into polite society, while the cigar and the cigarette were unknown. More than half a century later, when Thackeray wrote, it was obviously a high crime and misdemeanour to go into the presence of ladies exhaling an odour of tobacco. Yet we find Bartolozzi, in his quality of a foreigner probably, insisting on an indulgence unknown in the houses of English noblemen.

It is a somewhat sad sequel to an otherwise brilliant and successful life that Bartolozzi should at last have found it necessary to leave the country of his adoption. The genial Florentine had made a large income, probably as large as, if not larger than that of any painter of his time. But he spent his money as it came, and, indeed, rarely had much in hand. He seems to have been hardly dealt with by his employers, Boydell excepted, and was liberal enough to allow others instead of himself to profit by the extraordinary facility with which he could turn out work. He also had to maintain a "tail" of needy brethren of the brush and graver. Every impecunious Italian in London levied a tax on Bartolozzi. Many of these applicants were hopelessly incompetent or utterly unworthy, but it was sufficient for him that they were poor. Always overwhelmed with work, he had no time to investigate their claims, and allowed them at once. It was Thackeray who said that there is never so poor an Irishman in London but has a still poorer countryman as hanger-on. When the chief succeeds in getting some exceedingly speculative usurer to "do" a bill, there is always a string of claimants in waiting, whose demands descend from a five-pound note to half-a-crown. It was so with Italians at the end of the last century. London, seen from afar, appeared a city of palaces, each containing a noble patron such as the travelling milord who visited Italy on his grand tour. When the poor Italians reached London they found every place occupied—painters like Sir Joshua, Romney, and Gainsborough, beside whose

work their classical inanities were worthless. Hence Bartolozzi had plenty of people to help, and, although one of the most industrious men that the world has seen, always led a hand-to-mouth life.

After a residence of thirty-eight years in England, and in his seventy-fifth year, he received a twice-repeated invitation, coupled with the promise of a pension and knighthood, from the Prince Regent of Portugal to reside in that country. The offer was accepted, and in 1802 Bartolozzi left the scene of the best years of his life. He seems to have been satisfied with the reception and the entertainment accorded him, and to have lived in contentment until 1815, when his long and busy life came to an end.

DAFFODIL.

CHAPTER X. LADY BESS CARRIES HER POINT.

LADY BESS did not leave the farm that day, nor for several days after. Charmed by her beauty and amiability, the entire family united in pressing her to remain among them, and she made herself completely at home. Strange to say the person who was least delighted with her presence was ungrateful Laurence, who was so old a friend, and to see whom she had come so far. It was some time before she would unfold the business that had obliged her to seek his advice. There was time enough; she would enjoy her "holiday;" and at last he found that the matter in question was one on which he was both unable and unwilling to give counsel.

"It is about some money I have to invest," she said. "You see I have so much money I don't know what to do with it. A single woman ought not to be allowed to have so much money. And I have thought that as you are my nearest male relative you would advise me what to do."

"It is a matter for your lawyer," said Laurence; "I know nothing about investments. Surely you have a man of business who is accustomed to manage for you?"

"But you are so clever. If you would but think a little for me. I would rather have you manage my affairs than anyone else in the world."

They were walking in the garden by moonlight. She had asked him to come out that she might speak to him privately of her business. Now she plucked a rose and offered it to him. He took it with much politeness but without any rapture.

"I am the worst person in the world to advise you," he kept saying; "I would not venture to interfere in your affairs."

"You will at least come to London for a week, and speak for me to my lawyer about this particular investment?" said Lady Bess, trying to control her impatience at his stupidity.

"You must really excuse me for saying no. I have the greatest objection to meddling in what I do not understand."

Lady Bess turned aside to frown. She had not expected to be resisted with so much determination, by the man whom she had looked upon as pliant and simple compared with the other men she knew. She saw her pretty little plan for bringing him to her side and keeping him there for an indefinite time, baffled, and told herself that she must think of a better one which he could not overturn.

She had up to this time worked out admirably her own peculiar scheme of life, and she had no idea that it could possibly prove a failure in the end. In her girlhood she had married a rich old man, whom she disliked, for the sake of his wealth; and now that she had, as she said, more money than she knew what to do with, she thought she had only to throw the handkerchief and marry anyone she pleased. And Laurence pleased her.

Sitting at her window that night, overlooking the moonlit orchard and garden, the peaceful enclosures of so many years of Ursula's uneventful life, she asked herself what could be the power that was working against her will, where was the influence that impelled Laurence to waste the season in this dull and uninteresting spot, and resist her desire to transplant him to more fascinating scenes? One glance at Daughter had convinced her that from that quarter she had nothing to fear, and now all her suspicious displeasure settled upon the head of the girl whom she had believed to be only a child. Not a curve, tint, or dimple of Daffodil's beauty had been lost on her, and she was too much the artist by nature to think of trying to depreciate its value. She also recognised the charm of artlessness and freshness which the girl possessed, and which she knew to be wanting in herself. That Daffodil was sweet, good, and lovely, Lady Bess admitted freely. She could like her; she could love her; but she could not permit her to interfere with her own designs.

"Never was there sweeter flattery than the frank admiration in that child's eyes

as she looked at me," thought Lady Bess. "Well, I must work upon that admiration. I must draw her to myself. I will win her affections, and then I will bestow her on someone who will suit her much better than Laurence. She is too young to have given her heart to him as yet, even if she does not look upon him as a patriarch. In this sleepy place, with none but these stupid old people around her, she may learn to make a hero of him. I will be the maker of her destiny, as a first step towards the accomplishment of my own."

So the next day Lady Bess sent to London for some trunks, and arranged to spend a comfortable week at the farm, the consequence being that Ursula was at once immersed in household cares for the entertainment of the fastidious guest, while Laurence and Daffodil were kept more and more apart.

Each was in turn absorbed, and made use of, by Lady Bess. Daffodil's horse was placed at her disposal, and Laurence rode with her instead of with his ward. And when weary after her ride, the fair visitor could not rest in her own room without Daffodil by her side to moisten her handkerchief with eau de Cologne, and refresh her with her artless conversation.

Lady Bess's conversation, which was not artless, was all upon subjects calculated to fascinate a young imagination, and though the girl found it hard to be deprived of her walk with Mr. Dartfield, or her hour of idling with him in the garden, yet she listened to her new friend's account of life as to the wonders of a fairy tale.

"To think that you who have so much musical taste, so charming a voice, never have entered an opera-house," Lady Bess exclaimed. "When you come to me you must hear all the great singers and have lessons from a first-rate teacher. I suppose you have never danced?"

"I do not know how."

"Very little instruction will be enough for you with your graceful movements and delicate feet. I can fancy you waltzing."

"I should not dare."

"Wait till you hear the German waltzes played by a first-rate band, and you will forget yourself completely. Then how you will enjoy shopping. There are such lovely pale blues nowadays which will exactly suit your complexion. Pale blue silk, with lace and pearls; that will be your style I think. I have plenty of pearls, and they will be at your service. I can fancy what a sensation you will

make. Now read me a page of this novel; it will give you some idea of life during the season in town."

Daffodil read and was a good deal surprised at the new view of things placed before her; and Lady Bess, listening with closed eyes, hoped she was sowing the seeds of worldliness and ambition in the young girl's impressionable mind. The heroine of the novel succeeded in marrying a delightful peer with an unlimited income.

"You may think that exaggerated, my dear, but I assure you it is not so. Youth and beauty may have anything they like in this world. And I am sure Violet in the story was not half so enchanting as you. Nay, do not blush. You must learn to endure to hear it said."

Lady Bess did not know that Daffodil's imagination had given her guardian's character and features to the hero, and that in this lay her only interest in the tale. But how could Lady Bess imagine this? Mistakes of selfish people often arise from their being unable to enter into another's better nature, to perceive that it is different from their own. Taking themselves as the standard of all that is desirable, they cannot see what is above and beyond them. Having been a greedy girl herself, Lady Bess concluded that Daffodil must of course be the same.

"Let her once know the world and discover all she will require to enjoy it properly, and she will begin to look down on Laurence as I did myself long ago. I can afford him now. She cannot, and will soon make the discovery for herself."

Such were Lady Bess's reflections as she descended to dinner, well pleased with her afternoon devoted to Daffodil's instruction.

That evening arrived Marjoram and Company, from X—, full of a suppressed excitement which made his sleek red hair rise up in short flames before he had been long in the drawing-room. A housekeeping expedition of Ursula's to the town, which included a visit to her brother's office, had been the means by which he had learned that a wealthy and beautiful lady was sojourning at the farm. His clients had found him absent and short in his manner during the remainder of the afternoon. What if that future house of his were to be built after all not at his own expense, but out of the purse of a lovely Lady Elizabeth Marjoram. He would never allow her to be called by such a common name as Bess. Though not a particularly pious man, Samuel felt at this moment devoutly sure

that a wonderful interposition of Providence had prevented him sacrificing himself to Daffodil, Heaven having reserved him for a much nobler fate. He lost no time in looking out the will of the late Sir Roland Courtray, and, after reading it, sat lost in wonder at the extraordinary good fortune that was awaiting him. He began at once to choose a site for the long-planned house, and then pulled himself up, smiling at his own folly. Lady Bess had a fine place in another county besides her London establishment. But then he would want to be near his business at X—. Business? What was he dreaming of? He could not continue to practise his profession after making such a marriage. He looked round upon his familiar office, upon the safes and pigeon-holes which contained so many secrets of other people, and for a moment he feared a certain loss of power, and almost regretted that Destiny should have selected him for so high a position. But this was only a momentary weakness. What a pity Lady B—Elizabeth could not share her title with him as well as her wealth! Sir Samuel Marjoram would have sounded so exceedingly well.

During the progress of a game of whist that evening, Lady Bess could not but remark how often the lawyer revoked, and the very peculiar looks of approval he bestowed on herself.

"This dreadful little man has marked me already for his own," she thought, and there was a certain naiveté about his presumption that amused her.

She liked to be amused, knowing that good-humour was becoming to her, and no homage was too absurd for her acceptance. With Laurence for her partner she continued to bestow such looks on her aspiring opponent, as made the flames rise higher and higher upon his head.

Father made a fourth at the whist-table, and Daughter was looking for dropped stitches in Mother's knitting. Daffodil, in a dim corner, was singing softly sweet old ballads beloved by Laurence, who often cast a glance to where the slim figure sat between two candles which only just made her visible at the more distant end of the room. Across an old-fashioned window near her the curtains had not been drawn, and the moon was shining through the latticed panes. Here sat Giles, his eyes alternately fixed on the moon, and on Daffodil. She was singing his favourite ballad about a brave crusader knight who loved a lovely lady, and was killed in the wars for her sake. Love was

an element hitherto left out of Giles's romance, but Daffodil's companionship had of late given a new and delightful colour to his dreams. All his battles in the air were fought, all his castles in Spain were built, for her; a fact of which she was at present all unconscious, but of which she was fated speedily to become aware.

Giles in love was a very perplexed being. How to prove his adoration, how to cover himself with glory which should be reflected upon his liege lady, even how to settle wealth and lands upon her as a true knight should do, were questions that flitted uneasily through his bothered brain, and made him feel the awkward difference between his position and his sentiments. Think of the matter as he would, a basket of fresh trout for her breakfast was the only offering he knew how to make her, and Daffodil was not fond of trout. Had Lady Bess been his innamorata, even trout might have gained some value, for she had a capital appetite for fish. But the gracious London lady, with all her charms, fell short of Giles's delicate ideal.

The sole services he had been able to render his princess were in teaching her the arts of angling, and making flies. These she had perfectly learned; and seated meditatively by her side on the bank of the stream, seldom speaking, but listening delightedly to every word that fell from her lips, Giles passed the only exquisitely happy moments of his existence. If they two could but sit and fish so for ever, while their spirits inhabited imaginary castles and went through imaginary heroic scenes together, Giles's heaven would have been perpetual, and without a cloud. But unhappily Laurence would come and carry home her basket, and would take her away to walk with him, Ursula would give her tasks to do in the house, and now this Lady Bess was always wanting her at her side.

The ballad about the crusader finished poor Giles that night. He could not sleep, and was out at an unusually early hour next morning, whipping the stream, and seeing the face of his lady in every flower that opened its eye to the dawn. As fate would have it, Daffodil came out for an early walk, and finding him fishing on the river bank, seated herself near on a fallen tree, unconscious of the commotion which her appearance had excited in his breast.

"Mr. Giles, isn't it delightful this morning?"

"It—always is, Miss Daffodil, especially when you are here. Oh, if you and I

could sit so for ever! Just as we are—for ever, Miss Daffodil!"

"Decidedly that wouldn't be at all nice. Might you not get rheumatism, for instance?"

"Not with you so near," said Giles, gazing at her in meek adoration, while his rod drooped forgotten in his fingers.

"Then I am better than all the medicines in the advertisements," laughed the girl. "They only cure; they don't prevent—"

"Miss Daffodil, don't! Listen to me now, or I shall never be able to bring myself to the point again."

"What point? Oh, Mr. Giles, you have got such a bite, and the fish is running away with your line," cried Daffodil; and springing forward, and seizing the rod, which had fallen from the limp hand of the bewildered fisherman, she valiantly brought the fish to land.

"Beautifully done," said Giles ruefully. "Miss Daffodil, it is you who ought to have been the man; I—"

"But I do not feel at all like a man. You are not complimentary, Mr. Giles."

"Not complimentary! Oh, when I would give my life—twenty such lives—for you, if I had them. Miss Daffodil, will you marry me?"

"Marry—you!"

Her hands fell at her sides; she stood transfixed with astonishment.

"I love you desperately. I am terribly in earnest. I know I am not worthy—twenty of me would not be worthy of—of your little finger. As I said, if you could have been a man, and I had been your wife, being the weaker—I know I am making a muddle of it all, but the only thing is—"

He drew forth his pocket-handkerchief, as was his custom in moments of embarrassment, rolled it up in a ball, and proceeded to sharpen the end of his nose upon it.

Daffodil could no longer resist the fun of the situation, but burst into a fit of laughter and laughed till her eyes were full of tears.

"Oh, Mr. Giles, you never can be in earnest; I know it is only a joke."

But poor Giles, being all too much in earnest, was cut to the heart by the sound of her laugh. He turned away abruptly, and leaning against a tree, burst into tears.

"Fool! madman!" he muttered; "I know myself at last!"

"Oh, Mr. Giles, I am so sorry I have hurt you. I ought not to have laughed."

"Don't blame yourself. You could not help it. Go away from me, child. The hurt you have given me is all my own."

"Mr. Giles, do forgive me."

"Go away!" he repeated vehemently.

"You cannot help me now."

"I am so sorry," Daffodil kept saying; "so very sorry!"

She was amazed and abashed at the sight of his distress. Was there nothing she could do?

He held his face steadily averted and signed to her to go away.

"I am so grieved. I was very, very thoughtless, Mr. Giles."

"I tell you all you can do for me is to go away."

She retired to a little distance, but when she saw he had become more calm, she came back on tiptoe.

"Mr. Giles, I will knit you such a beautiful comforter for your neck."

"There is no comforter in the world for me," said Giles, leaning in a forlorn attitude against a tree. "The only kindness you can do me is to go out of my sight."

She waited a little longer, but he would not even glance at her, and, really troubled, she turned from him at last and walked slowly and mournfully home.

On the way to her own room she stopped at a lobby window, and, not seeing him coming for his breakfast, it was now her turn to cry.

Lady Bess came suddenly down upon her.

"Why, what is the matter, my dear?"

"Oh, nothing; only I have vexed Mr. Giles."

Lady Bess looked at her sharply.

"That is a piece of vexation which had to be given. I have seen it coming."

"Lady Bess! Why did you not tell me? I could have kept out of his way."

"Better to have it over. The ridiculous creature!"

"You must not say so. It was abominable of me to laugh."

"So you laughed? And now you are crying, you little simpleton. You will learn that you cannot afford to cry over all your rejected lovers."

"He will not look at me, and we have been such good friends. I cannot think what I shall do."

Lady Bess reflected. Here was an opening for her—an opportunity to bring forward a proposal of a trip to London for Daffodil.

"I will tell you what you must do, my dear. Come home with me till the awkwardness passes over. We shall have a gay time, and perhaps we may coax Mr. Dartfield to come to see us."

Daffodil's face, which had at first looked blank at the proposal, brightened.

"I am sure it would be delightful," she exclaimed.

And so the matter was settled, and Lady Bess was well pleased with her own address. If Laurence would not come to London for her sake, then perhaps he would come for the sake of Daffodil; and Daffodil in London, surrounded, as she would surround her, by admirers, would be less likely to think of Laurence than Daffodil in Sussex, with only Giles and Samuel Marjoram to contrast him with.

The news of her departure fell upon Laurence like a heavy curtain suddenly shutting out the light of day. And yet his better judgment told him it was well that she should go. The moment, fairly due, which was bound to put an end to their happy intercourse, had abruptly arrived, and that was all. Let all blessings, all joys, and all raptures follow her. Never more again could her light feet run beside him along the difficult pathway of life. Before their next meeting an impassable gulf must yawn between them. The pain he suffered had revealed to him the bitter fact that he loved her, and his duty now was to take advantage of her absence to do battle bravely with this misfortune. As for her, fresh and lovely in the springtime of her sweetness and beauty, she would find many to love her, more worthy, more suitable than he was.

Little guessing his thoughts, Daffodil departed with Lady Bess, satisfied in her belief that Laurence would follow them soon.

She spoke to him confidently of the pleasures they should enjoy together, and the wonderful sights they should see, and Laurence had not the heart to tell her that he meant to stay away from London for the sole and simple reason that she, with all her loveliness, was there. He could not drive the smiles from her face at the moment of parting.

"Good-bye, my Daffodil," he muttered, looking after the carriage that whirled her away. "Soon you will be taken possession of by that charming and eligible fellow whom I have seen from the first coming to meet and claim you; and you will easily forget all about me!"

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.